

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-18, 20-22, and 30 are canceled. Claims 19, 23, 25, 26, 29 and 31 are amended. Claims 19, 23-29 and 31 remain in the application.

Claims 1-5 and 15 are rejected for obviousness over JP405276153A. Claims 7-10 and 12-14 are rejected for obviousness over JP405276153A in view of SONET Transport Systems. These rejections are moot in view of the cancellation of claims 1-18.

Claims 19-21, 28 and 29 are rejected for obviousness over US Patent 6,018,406 in view of JP405276153A. This rejection is moot in view of the amendments to claims 19 and 29 and the cancellation of claims 20 and 21.

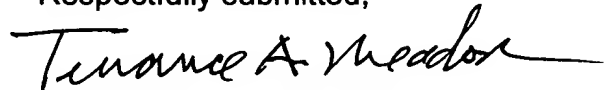
Claims 6, 11, 22-27, 30, and 31 are objected to for being dependent on a rejected base claim. This objection is moot with respect to claims 6 and 11, which have been cancelled.

Claim 19 has been amended by incorporating the limitations of canceled claims 20-22; it therefore corresponds to claim 22 rewritten in independent form including the limitation of the rejected base claim and all intervening claims. Claim 19 is therefore allowable as are claims 23-28 which depend from it.

Claim 29 has been amended by incorporating the limitations of canceled claim 30; it therefore corresponds to claim 30 rewritten in independent form including the limitation of the rejected base claim. Claim 29 is therefore allowable as is claim 31 which depends from it.

In view of these amendments and remarks, all claims in this application are patentable over the prior art of record, early notice of which is earnestly requested

Respectfully submitted,



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